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Remarks

This is in response to the non-final Office Action mailed November 9, 2006, which rejected claims 1-2 and 25-27 and indicated as allowable claims 3-10. The Applicant's Attorney expresses his sincere appreciation to the Examiner for his continued diligent efforts during the prosecution of this case.

Amendments to the claims have been provided above to independent claims 1 and 25, and new claims 28-32 have been added. Support for these amendments include FIG. 6 and in the specification at page 6, lines 18-26 and page 9, lines 3-6. For the record, the change in language from "*at least one rigid structural component*" to "*a rigid structural component*" will have no preclusive effect and does not limit the claimed subject matter to merely a single rigid structural component.

These amendments are believed to be proper, do not introduce new matter, and serve to place the application in proper condition for reconsideration and allowance. Upon allowance, the Applicant requests that newly added claims 28-32 be grouped together with the claims associated with claim 1.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-2 and 25-27 were rejected as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Document JP 2000-195249 by Ono et al. ("Ono '249").

This rejection is respectfully traversed on the basis that Ono '249 fails to disclose, teach or suggest "*wherein a first elastomeric component of said plurality contactingly engages the platform portion and a second elastomeric component of said plurality*

contactingly engages the rigid structural component apart from the platform portion," as now generally featured by claim 1.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1, and for claim 2, are respectfully requested on this basis. New claims 28-32 are believed to be patentable as depending from patentable base claim 1.

With regard to independent claim 25, Ono '249 fails to disclose, teach or suggest "wherein a first elastomeric component of said plurality contactingly engages the platform portion apart from the rigid structural component, and wherein a second elastomeric component of said plurality contactingly engages the rigid structural component apart from the platform portion." Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 25, and for the claims depending therefrom, are respectfully requested on this basis.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowability of claims 3-10.

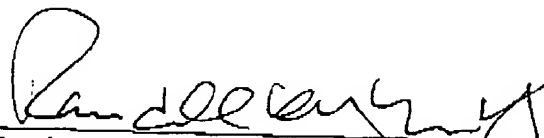
Conclusion

This is intended to be a complete response to the non-final Office Action mailed November 9, 2006. Reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims pending in the application are respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise concerning this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the below signed attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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